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National authorities and European Commission should step in over Ryanair scandal

As the European Parliament prepares to discuss the Ryanair saga, BEUC is reminding the EU institutions about the vital role national authorities play in enforcing EU law. Both the European Commission and national authorities should step in and make sure consumers' rights are being respected if Ryanair tramples on them.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, said: "Ryanair gives the impression it doesn't give a hoot about what consumers think. It has released select bits of information in batches to its customers and made claiming compensation complicated, so it is up to national authorities to step in.

"Some consumers are lucky that their national aviation authority has taken action, but that doesn't help consumers in another country necessarily. What consumers need is for all national authorities to closely co-operate in the Ryanair cancellation chaos and the European Commission to coordinate a coherent approach across the EU."

BEUC has three main recommendations for the EU:

- Enforcement in a piecemeal fashion is not a deterrent to Ryanair. The national authorities should closely work together and the European Commission should coordinate national responses to Ryanair.
- The lack of information and will to provide compensation to consumers shows that compensation should be automatic and that sanctions for non-compliant airlines have to be significantly strengthened. This should be included in any upcoming reform of EU air passenger rights.
- National authorities should also get Ryanair to cover the damages that consumers face as a knock-on effect of Ryanair cancelling its flights. For example, a cancelled Ryanair flight to Greece may mean the car rental or excursions there need to be cancelled by the consumer, which often has extra costs that leave the consumer out of pocket. Compensation for this consequential damage should also be included in any upcoming reform of EU air passenger rights.

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